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Jaina Concept of Suffering

MOHAN LAL MEHTA

Suffering is associated with the worldly soul which is essentially conscious, changing, active, enjoyer, equal in extent to its own body, different in each body and possessor of material *karmas*. It has been always bound by a state of suffering. This bondage is fundamentally due to some kind of spiritual ignorance which consists of a misunderstanding or lack of awareness of one's true nature as well as of the factors which cause that nature to be obstructed. Hence, elimination of ignorance provides the only instrument whereby the shackles of bondage, i.e. suffering, can be removed.

Suffering is evil, and to impose suffering is to impose evil. Injurious activities inspired by selfishness lead to suffering. To do harm to others is to do harm to oneself. We corrupt ourselves when we intend to corrupt others. We kill ourselves as soon as we intend to kill others. By nature are the worldly beings fond of life and have repulsion for suffering. Property is an evil, since it cannot be accumulated without causing suffering to others

With this general introduction we now take up the Jaina account of suffering and happiness. The soul as such is possessed of infinite bliss, but owing to its association with *karmas* it fails to enjoy it. The two types of *karmas* responsible for the generation of happiness and suffering are known as feeling-producing and deluding *karmas*.

Suffering is generally experienced in two forms : sense-feeling and emotion. Sense-feeling is the outcome of the feeling-producing (*vedanīya*) *karma*, whereas the deluding (*mohanīya*) *karma* produces various states of emotion. The distinguishing factor of the two lies in the fact that sense-feeling originates chiefly from sense-perception, whereas emotion emerges mainly from mental disposition. The term sense-feeling denotes simple states of pain and pleasure, whereas emotion consists of complex states of misery and happiness.

Do any definite objects or conditions necessarily produce pain ? Are there any definite things that always generate pleasure ? The Jaina philosophers hold that pain as well as pleasure is conditioned and not caused by external objects. No definite object can be prescribed as the essential cause of the emergence of pain or pleasure. It is the rise of the feeling-producing *karma* which is mainly responsible for the emergence of pain and pleasure. The rise of the pain-producing (*asātā-vedanīya*) *karma* gives rise to the feeling of pain and that of the pleasure-producing (*sātā-vedanīya*) *karma* causes the feeling of pleasure. The external objects serve as the helping cause. They are the media through which we suffer or enjoy. In the absence of the rise of the corresponding *karma* an external object alone is not considered to be sufficient enough to give rise to the feeling of pain or pleasure. The object which is generally understood to be the cause of a feeling is not the essential cause but only a helping cause. If this is not admitted, a thing which is painful to me would also be painful to others. But such is not the case. The same is the position of pleasurable things.

The Jaina does not agree with him who regards pain to be positive in character and pleasure to be negative in nature. He says that pain as well as pleasure is experienced owing to the rise of feeling-producing *karma*. The rise in both cases is positive in character. Hence, both pain and pleasure are positively real. The Jaina, unlike the Buddhist, does not recognise any neutral feeling. All feeling is categorically divided into two types : painful and pleasant. There is no possibility of a feeling which is neither painful nor pleasurable. Similarly, pain and pleasure cannot co-exist in a mixture. The so-called mixed feelings are nothing but various sucessions of pain and pleasure. In these cases either pain is followed by pleasure or pleasure by pain. Both of them cannot arise simultaneously, since no two conscious activities occur at one and the same moment.

An emotion is a mental excitement. Sometimes it is aroused by mere ideas and sometimes by sense-perceptions. In both these cases mental agitation plays the chief role The Jaina thinkers ascribe the emergence of emotions of the rise of conduct-deluding (*cāritramohanīya*) *karma*. Emotions are of two varieties : strong and mild. Strong emotions are called passions (*kasāyas*) and mild emotions are called quasi-passions (*nokasāyas*). The quasi-passions co-exist with the passions and also inspire them. There are four fundamental passions : anger, pride, deceit and greed. Pride and greed fall under attachment, whereas anger and deceit come under aversion.

Anger is a normal response to frustration. When some situation, real or imaginary, unduly restricts the freedom of action of an individual, the individual loses his temper. Sometimes it takes the form of revenge and aggression. Pride is an outcome of ego-ecentricity. It is manifested in the shape of self-assertion and self-display. The intention to deceive others is the root-cause of lying. All fraudulence is due to the passion of deceit. Greed is a state of attachment arising owing to discontentment or dissatisfaction of desires and ambitions. The mainsprings of our worldly conduct are cravings produced by dissatisfaction of our desires. Anger and deceit may be taken to be two forms of emotional suffering, whereas pride and greed may be understood as two forms of happiness.

The quasi-passions are of two varieties : sexual and non-sexual. The sexual passions consist of male sex, female sex and dual sex. The dual sex is the strongest one which is comprised of both homosexuality and heterosexuality and is not of the nature of frigidity or impotency.

The non-sexual quasi-passions are six : laughter, liking, disliking, fear, sorrow and disgust. Laughter includes smiling, joking etc. These are the various forms of joy. Liking is the love for others that grows out of the pleasure or satisfaction we obtain from the presence or companionship of others. Sympathy is also included in it. Disliking is opposed to liking. Disgust is a developed state of disliking. It takes the form of hate. Fear is an insistent desire to escape. It is directed to some threatening situation, real or imaginary, with which we do not feel safe. Terror and anxiety are the forms of fear. The rapidity of increasing fear leads to terror. The anticipatory danger produces anxiety. Fear may be of one's own class, of another class, of protection, fanciful, of pain, of death, of dishonour. Sorrow is opposed to joy. Weeping, crying and the like are the most common expressions of sorrow.

Thus, some of the above-mentioned forms of emotion constitute misery and distress, whereas the other varieties form happiness and joy. But really speaking all sense-feelings and emotions are nothing but suffering, inasmuch as they are karmic products. Real happiness, i.e. bliss, which is completely free from suffering, is experienced only in a state absolutely free from *karmas*. The liberated soul, and not the worldly one, is in a fit position to realise the real happiness.

We actually see that in the worldly life happiness is obtained through means like wealth etc., why then is not recommended this happiness but that which is of the form of liberation ? Liberation is recommended

because it yields real happiness. The worldly life yields happiness no doubt, but that is pseudo-happiness. The worldly happiness arises through the fulfilment of desires. It is the very nature of a desire that as soon as or even before it is fulfilled hundreds of others crop up. It is not possible for all these new desires to be fulfilled. Even if that be possible, there will meanwhile arise thousands of other desires whose fulfilment will remain certainly impossible. It is implied, therefore, that in the worldly life the unhappiness born of the non-fulfilment of desires always weighs heavier than the happiness born of the fulfilment thereof. Hence, the happiness in question is called pseudo-happiness. On the other hand, liberation involves an absence of all desires and an emergence of natural contentment which lasts forever. This kind of happiness is real happiness And that is the end of suffering.



With her golden apples and flowing scarf the Teutonic goddess Idun manifests her youthful charm in the beam of celestial light. She is the wife of Odin's son Bragi, the god of poetry. Seen as flying like an apsara of Hindu, Buddhist and Nirgrantha mythology Idun epitomises an ancient longing of the poet in man In Teutonic mythology she is the 'goddess of eternal youth' Painting by Constantin Hansen. Copenhagen Museum, Denmark.

The Daughters of Heaven in the Art of the Nirganthas

P. C. DASGUPTA

Through past epochs and across chapters that cover the landmarks of human civilisation what is manifest everywhere is the expression of art. This is an episode inseparable from the history of nations often being pleasingly distinguishable from the sequels of tumults of conflicts and organisations. Thus, the artists of the past with their own characteristic sensitivity and appreciation explored the beauty of landscapes, the themes of legends, the feelings of saints and heroes and the physical grace of woman identifiable sometime as a divinity and sometime as a queen of love and mystery who has ever evoked longings of the poet in man. Thus, for instance, the Egyptian art essayed to interpret the grace of the Pharaos and the blossoming or mature beauty of women with their areas of charm scarcely hidden by a close-fitting wear while in movement or in a static poise, the Assyrians depicted the passion of lion-hunts and

their unforgiving energy in martial activities, the Greek sculptors brought into dimension the glory of Apollo, the mythical heroes, the warriors in exultation or defeat and the smooth curves of Aphrodite who may evoke passion or sublime love (Aphrodite Urania) and the Chinese yearned for the enchantment of the Mahayana paradise and the eternal sublimity of landscapes distinguished by mountains, valleys and rivers what at times appear to be reposeful and out of the world. In a like manner the art in India essentially conveys a deep appreciation of beauty wherein are enthroned the ideals of divinity and the timeless grandeur of soul that are capable in achieving knowledge in its perfection in our manifestingly transient world and existence. Being constant to the purport of iconographic details and *motifs* the sculptors and painters in the country could visualise in all times the beauty of woman symbolising as it were the promise of kindest light where it is difficult to tell a mortal from the celestials. This is the perspective where the art of the Nirgrantha envisages the daughters of heaven and the female devotees and attendants of the Tirthankaras. The feeling is also captured at times by female dancers whose purity and ecstasy softly gleam on white marbles as their blushes and seductive grace are best remembered on illuminated folios of manuscripts of scriptural texts. Such representation of feminine grace in Jaina art visibly contrasts with the austerity and unshaken discipline of the meditating Tirthankaras either seated in *padmāsana* or standing in *kāyotsarga* pose. Herein one may discover a reality or to define it further, an impression with regard to the beauty of the world side by side with the glory of eternal life in its physical and ethereal aspects and ultimately the culminating plane for the soul in its ascent as it has been defined by the journey of the Kevalin. The feeling of absolute realisation and equipoise as conveyed by the Jinas transcends the light of a perfect calm that brings in its fold all the joys, sufferings and tremors of life and the visual world with the promise of an eternal bliss of a silent glory. The celestial women have been treated by the artists with a deep tone of inner understanding a kind of which in a limited sense resting on a much different theme could dawn upon the Western celebrities like Giorgione and Edouard Manet many centuries after. Giorgione in his famed painting *Concert Champetre* and Edouard Manet in his revolutionising masterpiece *The Luncheon on the Grass* have defined a wall of indifference between the ripe beauty of womαn divested of garments and well-dressed males that will appear in a way so elementary in the expression of Jaina art where youthful ladies as goddesses or as other daughters of heaven viz. *the yaksis, the apsarās* and *the surasundaris* appear before a perspective where the knowledge of the atoms that belies the piquancy and sorrows of the transient existence communicates an eternal truth, the message of liberation from rebirth. The composition



The marble goddess of everlasting grace offers boons to the mortals in their transient world of passion and attachment. Yaksini Cakresvari in the Jaina temple of Vimala Shah at Dilwara on Mt. Abu in south-western Rajasthan, 11th century A.D.



An Apsara striking a pose by her dainty arms that projects a dreamlike grace and the irresistable charm of the celestial world. Painting in the Jaina temple of Sittanavasal near Tanjore, c. 7th century A. D.



Love and expectation of a Nayika or Surasundari. Eastern Ganga, 10th century, Bhuvaneswara, Orissa. The mood resembles the shy elegance of Bandini's Juno.



Manifesting the splendour of her divine grace Juno, the queen of Roman paradise is shown in a moment of contemplation like a Surasundari. 16th century. By Giovanni Bandini, known as Giovanni Dell Opera. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

of sculptures and reliefs sometimes presents an absorbing contrast in respect of the central theme by introducing female dancers and meditating goddesses in their full bloom of womanly grace as if to produce a silent and inevitable symphony on the perception of the nature of eternity. In fact, the celestial women have also highlighted the beauty of a world where the messengers of space or heaven could appear before mortals whose souls are subjected to an endless transmigration in terms of their range of behaviour and attitude of life. Thus, Nilanjana performs her captivating dance in accompaniment of an orchestra before Rsabha on a Sunga stone-carving from Mathura and youthful ladies donned in *sārī* that hardly conceals their lissome beauty are adoring the holy *triratna* and the *cakra* on the pedestal of an image of Muni Suvrata as placed in Vodva *stūpa*. The treatment and rendering of the latter are as intimate and sentimental as the beauty of the rural *milieus* and the countryside. Two naked *apsaras* unaware of the urgency of their grace will be again noticed as piously resting their head on a Jaina *stūpa* in the *Āyāgapaṭa* of Sivayasa from Mathura datable to 1st-2nd century A.D. where the archtypal *toraṇa* of the period with its voluted architraves and the holy *triratna* and the honeysuckle is flanked by ornamental pillars and the conventional rails. With their one hand on hips that conveys the lure of *de'hanchement* the ladies manifest a personal endearment of the *stūpa* by standing on the rails above the basement seemingly to prove, that they have landed from their ethereal home. Here it may be recalled that the traditional presence of *apsarās* has its own significance in the art of Mathura where once stood, as told by legends, a *stūpa* of the Nirgranthas that was built by a goddess (*devanirmita*). In the context of the importance of the legends of the *devanirmita stūpa* referred to the faith of the devouts in respect of the appearance of the heavenly ones will gain an amount of intimacy verging on credulity in a classical environment. While studying the history of Jaina art U.P. Shah has given the following details in respect of this vanished monument :

"The pedestal of a Jina image referring to Arhat Nandyavarta, obtained from Kankali Tila was installed in the *devanirmita stūpa* according to the inscription on it dated in year 49 or 79. According to Jinaprabha Suri, there was a *stūpa* of Suparsvanatha at Mathura, made of gold and jewels erected by a goddess (*devanirmita*) in one night ; during a controversy with other sects regarding its ownership, the goddess Kubera is said to have guarded it and helped the Jainas. Later a king of Mathura wanted to take away the gold, whereupon the goddess became angry and wrought earthquakes and was pacified only when all the inhabitants of Mathura agreed to carve a figure of a Jina on their door-lintels. Once Parsvanatha came to Mathura and preached the doctrine.

After his departure, the goddess told the inhabitants and the king that bad times were approaching and that she would not live to protect the *stūpa* for ever in its uncovered condition. The priceless *stūpa* should therefore be covered under a superstructure of bricks. She also asked them to install in front a stone sculpture of Parsvanatha. This was done." (*Studies in Jaina Art*, Banaras 1955, pp. 62-63) In this connection the eminent scholar has also recalled that the "Digambara texts like the *Bṛhatkathā-kośa* of Harisena (932 A.D.) give a story of the origin of five *stūpas* at Mathura all built by gods during a controversy with the Buddhists." (*Ibid.*, p. 63) U.P. Shah has pointed out that one *devanirmita stūpa* at Mathura has been again mentioned in the *Yaśastilaka-campū* of Soma. It has been felt that, such a tradition will obviously explain the origin or perspective of the *pañcastūpa-nikāya* of the region of Mathura. Though views may be offered as to the legends of the *stūpa* built by a goddess that will define a dependable truth the subject will ever evoke the memory of a mysterious past, fascinating and half-forgotten. Such myths can at present induce speculations on the sources of civilisation in the ancient world which at times may now even venture to refer to unknown contacts beyond the boundary of our familiar history. To the faithful the *devanirmita stūpa* or *stūpas* of Mathura evidently appeared resplendent with purity. In this connection it may be remembered that the Greeks in antiquity knew the city as *Madoura ton theon* i.e. 'Mathura of the gods'.

As it will be observed, centuries after the epochs of Parsvanatha and Mahavira the memory of goddesses and other heavenly women continued to inspire the art of the Jainas and thereby brought about a flowering grace to sculptures and paintings that seemingly essayed to confine in seductive lines the unseen beauty of another world. Here, of course, it may be observed that in the general works of art in India concerning alike the Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina mythology the Sunga-Kushan sculptures of female divinities and celestial women with their bold masses can be irresistible yet remaining remote and too sensuously beautiful to be owned. Save for this general likeness that pervades at times through later epochs the Jaina works of art gradually tends to express beauty, movement and a spiritual calm in a distinctive manner. Herein one may discover an exposition of an inner urge of the faithful to reach the glory of eternity beyond all our attachment pitifully conditioned by time and space. Thus, the female divinities, the *yakṣīs*, the attending ladies and the ballerinas of the celestial world appear in connection with the adoration of the Tirthankaras or the Arhats who became the Kevalin for attaining the final knowledge or omniscience that liberated them from the cycle of rebirth and thereby from the bondage of time. The attitude of the



Ambika, the Sasanadevi of Tirthankara Neminatha, Ellora, Maharashtra. Gupta-Chalukya. The refined elegance of the slender form appears as graceful and remote as the bronze Danae of Benvenuto Cellini of Florentine School.

Nirgrantha towards the meaning of life based on a profoundly rational philosophy has perpetually given a refinement and a characteristic formality to the depiction of the celestials and the mortals for defining iconography and themes of narrative value. Actually, the Jaina goddesses and dancing *troupes* of youthful females of the temple of Dilwara on Mount Abu as visualised by the sculptors of tenth century A.D. have the far away grace of impossible images as if carved of moon-beams that is capable of dissolving into a music ever unheard. The *vidyā-devis* and the *apsarās* with their well-defined features and purity of physical grace accentuated by seductive lines and volumes present indeed a marvel in art where passion will even evoke our longing for the eternal light. As Benjamin Rowland opines with regard to the delicately worked ceiling of the cupola of the shrine,



The willowy Danae of Benvenuto Cellini. Renaissance bronze of 16th century. Piazza Della Signoria, Loggia de hanzi, Florence Italy. Her polished grace and coyish elegance in the nude will remind us of certain supreme accomplishments in art.

"The dome culminates in a richly carved pendant, like a stalactite hung in the centre of the vault. Placed athwart the lower rings of the dome are brackets with representation of Jaina goddesses of wisdom. In their semi-detached projection they appear like struts actually holding the cupola... There is, to be sure, true beauty in the pearly radiance reflected from what seems like a huge and weightless flower. Looking up at this ceiling is to behold a dream-like vision blooming, in the half-light, like some marvellous under-water formation in coral and mother-of-pearl. The deeply pierced working of the figures and the unbelievably delicate foliate motifs have the fragility of snowflakes." (*The Art and Architecture of India*, Great Britain 1959, p. 169) Whereas the fresco depicting *apsarās* in the Jaina sanctuary of Sittanavasal near Tanjore and those appearing in the paintings of the Indra Sabha Cave at Ellura convey an ideal of feminine charm that emphasises upon the longing of the poet in man for the eternally fair and winsome as evoked in antiquity by the Roman goddess Pomona and the Teutonic Idun, the concept of the divine woman in Jaina art only tends to be associated with the knowledge and liberation of the Tirthankaras. Considering that the flying angels of Ajanta in a Buddhist setting reflect an unbelievable beauty as indicative of an ethereal perspective and the *apsarās* and *devāṅganās* of Indian art in general convey a sense of feminine grace which vie with the charm of Hellenistic masterpieces and the works of such celebrities as Benvenuto Cellini and Giovanni Bandini of mediaeval Florence it may be felt simultaneously that the central inspiration of Jaina art in this respect symbolises a distinctive ideal and yearning. The Jaina divinities and godlings as envisaged in art do not so much promise of a paradise and its perpetual felicity as much the bliss and the final realisation epitomised by the emancipated. Thus, in these instances the art will make communion with the knowledgeable in the perspective of the ideology and the metaphysics involved. The elegant dancers of Sittanavasal manifest the splendour of their eternal youth fit to be complimented by a classic verse. By striking a pose by her dainty arms a dancer here projects a dreamlike grace whose function is only ancillary to the way of gods still far away from the ultimate realisation, the plane of the Siddhas. Likewise, the divine lovers shown flying in the firmament in the paintings of the Indra Sabha Cave at Ellura will again define the felicity of a heaven where mortal longings and desire find a destination unhindered by physical weight and all reproach. This promise of happiness, if accepted as such, is of course still remote from the horizon of realisation attained by the Jinas who in their earlier births and initial years before becoming a Kevalin lived as one among other mortals. As if to define the progress of the vigilent towards the celestial height where passion and desire merge dreamlike in the soft haze of silken nimbus or cirrus clouds losing the



Jaina Devi standing in tribhanga pose, Deogarh, Dt. Jhansi, Uttarpradesh c 10th century A D She is in all probability a personification of knowledge that is overflowing with mercy and serenity. At the same time the sculpture's sensitivity and freshness as also its form replete with womanly grace will recall some of the later Florentine works of art in Europe.

urgency of the transient world the goddesses, angels and other playful beauties of heaven appear in Jaina art adding, as it appears, an intimate grace to an iconography and philosophy of unique profoundity. Such an adoration of the daughters of heaven as a preamble in understanding the supreme truth has stimulated the Jaina art in general throughout India. The ideal had in antiquity inspired the art of Manbhum as it also did the same in other parts of India ranging over mountains, deserts and verdant plains. Whether she be a *cauri*-bearer of bronze from Akota in Saurastra or a *surasundari* replete with feminine grace from Pakbirra in Purulia district or one of the enchantress on the walls of the Jaina temple of Parsvanatha at Khajuraho in Uttar Pradesh or any of the *devānganās* that adorns the shrine of Vimala Vasahi on Mount Abu or a celestial of Ranakpur in Rajasthan or their glowing sisters on folios of manuscripts the ideals of the artists and the devotees essay to present a world full of meaning and symbolism as a tympanum on the entrance to the temple of knowledge which is transcendental. Furthermore, the ideal of *Sarasvati* or *śruta devī* conveys the majesty of understanding and the eternal truth which presides over the knowledge of the universe embodying at times a pensive consideration of all that is time-bound or transitory. The Jaina adoration of goddesses as manifested by its iconography has indeed discovered a divine grace in the figuration of Trisala, the mother of Mahavira recalling as it were, the mature beauty of the spouse of Siva in his *sadyojāta* form and that of queen Maya, the mother of Gautama Buddha. In fact, the *śāsana devis*, *vidyā devīs*, *yakṣinīs* and *nāginīs* in Jaina iconography and legends have a glory of their own beside the theme of of personal liberation of mortals. Whether the ideal form of Jaina *surasundarīs* with their indifference to their surroundings as also those of the comparable and plethoric creations of Brahmanical or Buddhist artistry and inspiration could have an impact upon the art of the West during the height of Saracenic rule in the Levant is yet to be determined. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the nude Danae or Juno of Florentine art during Renaissance and the comparable masterpieces, the chics of Fontainebleau scintillate in the perspective of the rise of Venice and her contact with the Orient. These slender and delicate forms have already created an enigma for the connosisseurs in the field. One may wonder, whether the intimate appeal of these women of unspeakable beauty so detached from the European classical convention and style may refer to the light of a warmer Oriental sun that might have showered gold from a horizon far away.

NAGILA

GANESH LALWANI

In those days there were a few girls as beautiful as Nagila. That's why Bhavadeva fell in love with her and married her.

Everyday life is full of work and people come for business all day long. So taking leave of this world Bhavadeva as if has reached at the lone heart of Nagila. Whatever were in Nagila one could not give expression nor could forget. And this had over-whelmed Bhavadeva like the tune of a *vīṇā* heard from a distance. So everyday he used to decorate her as he wanted and then caressing her soft cheek with overpowering emotion he would say, 'Ye are Queen of my heart . . .'

Nagila also reciprocated the devotion of Bhavadeva immensely. In reply she would say, 'That's because of your love, my dear !'

Bhavadeva used to muse and then would say, 'Small is my world. But your love ?--that was like the whispering of the bamboo leaves.'

That was a month of Spring. Everywhere was *Sāla* blossom at its best. Nagila was seated before Bhavadeva in the courtyard. Her light dark hair was gleaming in the bright rays of the sun. Her costly garments were also shining. Besides her were strewn flowers of rare variety.

At that very moment some one knocked at the door. Though Bhavadeva was reluctant to open the door, still he had to go and open it.

In front of the door there stood his elder brother Bhavadatta.

Years ago Bhavadatta gave up the household life taking initiation in *śramaṇa*-hood. But they loved each other since child-hood. So seeing him after so many years his face beamed with joy.

They talked for a long time. And when Bhavadatta took leave of him he followed him taking his begging bowl in his hand.

Bhavadeva only wanted to accompany him for a short distance but going through the village at last they reached the forest.

All the way Bhavadatta never told Bhavadeva to return his begging bowl nor Bhavadeva was able to say to him, 'Take your begging bowl, I am now returning', though he was very much anxious for Nagila. He knew Nagila was still waiting for him at the door for his return.

Seeing Bhavadeva coming with the begging bowl with his elder brother, the inmates of the hermitage were all glad. The Acarya even fixed his date of initiation.

Bhavadeva could not say a word even now as he was not able to say as he crossed the lemon tree, the cow shed and the store of grain walking all the way beside the sesamum field. He thought after coming here with the begging bowl of his elder brother, if he would now say that he didn't want to be initiated it would be an insult to his elder brother. To insult him was impossible, so impossible was to forget Nagila.

Vacilating thus he took initiation. He thought, so long Bhavadatta lived he would be there. Thereafter he would return to Nagila.

After long twelve years Bhavadatta left his mortal frame Bhavadeva that very night when all were asleep escaped from the hermitage and was on his way home.

After crossing the paddy field he arrived at last at his own village. The dawn was just breaking.

The way to his house was beside the mango grove. There near a well he saw two women drawing water.

Before entering the village Bhavadeva had a second thought. Whether his home was in tact or had fallen down, whether Nagila was still there or not ? If she was not there the emptiness of that house would be more poignant than the cry of a dumb being. Then why not he would ascertain from them the whereabout of Naglia before entering the village. If she was not still there he would return from where he had come.

So when he asked one of the women about Nagila she began to look at him intently. Her eyes moistened. She said, 'Don't you recognise me ?'



Bhavadeva looked at her. Yes, it was she. But where had gone her beauty ? If anything remained of her it was only her charming smile.

One spring he left his house. And this is also a spring when he had returned. The *Sāla* blossom reminded him of that day. He said, 'Nagila, I am still yours.'

Nagila began to laugh. Then said, 'Am I that Nagila ?'

Bhavadeva failed to grasp the meaning of her words. So he said, 'Nagila, I have not thought of anything else than you these last twelve years. . . '

Nagila pondered in her mind : It's shamefull. Had she so much worth in her ?

Bhavadeva said, 'Nagila, let us go home ?'

'Home ? But now there is no space for us to live in that home.'

Bhavadeva began to look at the unparalleled beauty of the dawn. The sun was rising behind the blue hills in the east. The leaves were shining like soft emerld in the golden light of the sun.

He said, 'Really is there no space ?'

'How could there be ?' She was outspoken at last. 'Do you expect that I shall help you to fall from your vows. I love you.'

Bhavadeva's heart began to break with pain when he heard, 'I love you.'

Nagila had washed away the pangs of separation with her tears in the beatitude of this love.

Bhavadeva remained looking fixed at her face. She appeared not earthly. She was sublime.

How can the pangs of desire enter into the domain of love ! In her love Nagila had seen Bhavadeva in the bliss of an eternal glory. It was why she could say, 'I love you still you have no place in my home.'

Bhavadeva discovered the etherial grace of her reasoning. As he felt, she was standing on the golden pericarp of eternal love.

For that bliss Bhavadeva once again left the place by the way that was heavy with the scent of wet grass and woodland.

JAINISM

B. B. KUNDU

Its Antiquity

durgatiprapa'prāṇidhāraṇā'dharma ucyate

That which holds the self (i.e. *ātmā*) from distress is called *dharma.*

The aim of Jainism is to lead every man and woman irrespective of caste and creed towards *mokṣa* and with this end in view, it prescribes a course of righteous practices which are vigorous excercises of discipline in character.

The Jainas believe that their religion originated from Rsabhanatha or Adinatha, known as the first Tirthankara (ford-finder), who flourished at a very very remote past. After Rsabha, they feel, as many as 23 Tirthankaras appeared in succession. Of them, the penultimate and the last Tirthankaras were Parsvanatha and Mahavira respectively. Modern scholarship regards these two Tirthankaras as real figures and the rest as imaginary. It fixes the date of death of Mahavira at about 467 B.C. and the date of Parsvanatha to be about 800 B.C. and regards Parsvanatha as the originator of Jainism.

But, I humbly feel, that the claim of the Jainas that their religion dates back from a very remote past is not altogether baseless in as much as the 24 Tirthankaras of the Jainas have been mentioned in the ***Rgveda,*** one of the oldest books of the world,[1] in the ***Rk,*** *aum trailokyapratiṣṭhā-tānām caturvimśati tīrthakarāṇām.* Moreover, in the ***Rk,*** *aum pavitra lagnam śudhiram digvasanam brahmagarvasanātanam upemi vīram puruṣa-marhat mādityavarṇam tamasah parastā'svāhā* reverence has been shown

[1] About 2500 to 2000 B.C. See on this point, Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, New Delhi, 1977, Munshiram Monoharlal, p. 290-310. This is a reprint of the 1927 edition published by the Calcutta University.

to the sky-clad, calm, Brahma like, permanent Arhatas, monks who attained enlightenment. In the *Yayurveda* another quite old book in the *mantra aum namohardrptorṣabho* it has been stated that Rsabhadeva, Ajitanatha, Suparsva and Aristanemi are the Tirthankaras of the Jainas.[2]

There is another aspect about the antiquity of Jainism. It is its metaphysical conceptions, animistic belief and simple faith in the worship of rituals and morals. Its philosophy has been held to be the oldest of all Dravidian born philosophies and religions, its metaphysics is based on primitive animism because it attributes souls not only to living beings and insects but also to all vegetation, earth, water, fire, stones, etc. that is to say, Jainism treats these to represent life in varied forms.[3] Its worship of rituals and morals also reflects a relatively primitive form of human society where men attributed much value to the observance of the rituals and obediance to the moral injunctions. It is because of such nature of Jainism that Dr. H. Jacobi pointed out that "Jainism goes back to a very early period, and to primitive currents of religious and metaphysical speculation, which gave rise to the oldest Indian philosophies They (the Jainas) seem to have worked out system from the most primitive notions about matter "[4] Dr. H. Zimmer felt that Jainism represented the thinking of the non-Aryan peoples of India and believed that "there is truth in the Jaina idea that their religion goes back to a remote antiquity, the antiquity in question being that of the pre-Aryan, so called Dravidian period, which has recently been dramatically illuminated by the discovery of a series of great Late Stone Age cities in the Indus Valley, dating from the third and perhaps even to fourth millennium B C."[5] He also "regarded Jainism as the oldest of the non Aryan group, in contrast to most Occidental authorities, who consider Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha, to have been its *founder* istead of, as the Jainas themselves (and Dr. Zimmer) claim, only the last of a long line of Jaina teachers."[6]

This leads us to consider (with my very very limited capacity) whether the 24 Tirthankaras viz Rsabha, Ajita, Sambhava, Abhinandana,

[2] This paragraph leans heavily on Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan's *Bharat Sanskrtir Utsadhara* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1372, Bharati Library, p. 489. The *Rks* have been found quoted there.

[3] This is no peculiarity of Jainism It is a common feature of some of the ancient human societies.

[4] Vide Jain, J. P., *Religion and Culture of the Jainas*, New Delhi, 1975, Bharatiya Jnanpith publication, p. 169.

[5] Zimmer, H., *Philosophies of India*, New York, 1960, Meridan Books Inc. Editor's foot note on p. 60.

[6] *Ibid*, italics in the original

Sumati, Padmaprabha, Suparsva, Candraprabha, Suvidhi, Sitala, Sreyamsa, Vasupujya, Vimala, Ananta, Dharma, Santi, Kunthu, Ara, Malli,[7] Suvrata, Nami, Aristanemi, Parsva and Mahavira, are historical fiigures or not.

The Jaina religious texts like *Ācārānga*, *Samavāyānga* and *Kalpasūtra* contain ideas about the Tirthankaras. The *Anga* texts are the oldest in the Jaina literature and these date back from the time of the first Jaina council held at Pataliputra more than 160 years after the death of Mahavira.[8] Hence, these cannot be taken as ancient texts. Moreover, if one computes the age or period of the Jaina Tirthankaras in accordance with the accounts given in these religious texts, one would have to place most of the early Tirthankaras at periods when men did not appear, according to the Geological calculation, on this world. So, very little reliance can be placed on these texts with reference to the dates or periods of time of the early Jaina Tirthankaras.

Historical existence of the last two Tirthankaras viz. Parsvanatha and Mahavira, has been established in recent times. In the case of the 22nd Tirthankara viz. Aristanemi the scholars have found that he was a first cousin of Krsna, the prophet of the *Bhagavad Gitā*, and that his father Samudravijaya was a brother of Krsna's father, Vasudeva. Because of this reference, Aristanemi has become less mythological than his forerunners. There are statues of the Jaina Tirthankaras scattered all over India and there are inscriptions, mostly found in Mathura, an important Jaina Centre of ancient India, in the names of Sambhavanatha, Santinatha, Aranatha and Aristanemi.

Moreover, it is seen from a study of the article entitled 'Jaina Sampradaya' by Late A.C. Das[9] that Late Colonel J. Tod, after having studied the insciptions on the stones and the copper plates of the Jainas found in Saurastra, Jaisalmer and certain other parts of Rajasthan where the Jainas used to live in the old days, came to the conclusion that the 1st Tirthankara of the Jainas who founded the Lunar dynasty was born in 2500 B. C., the 22nd Tirthankara, Neminath, in 1120 B.C., the 23rd Thirthankara Parsvanath in 650 B.C. and the 24th Tirthankara, Mahavira in 533 B.C. After noting this, Late Das held that all the twentyfour Tirthankaras

[7] Svetambaras believe that this Tirthankara was a woman, Digambaras do not believe this.

[8] According to the Jaina belief, Mahavira died on 527 B.C. H. Jacobi, however, advocated 467 B.C. as the appropriate year of Mahavira's death.

[9] Reprinted in *Bangalir Dharma Darsan Cinta* (in Bengali) edited by A. Banerjee, Calcutta, 1980, Nava Patra Prakasan, p. 62.

of the Jainas were human beings and they attained *mokṣa* through penance and austerity.

Further, we should remember that the Tirthankaras have been mentioned in the *Rgveda* and that the Jainas themselves believe, through tradition, that the Tirthankaras were living beings and that a tradition may not have a strong historical foundation beneath it but it does not grow out of nothing. There is also a consensus of opinion among some scholars that Jainism dates back from the pre-Vedic times. Accordingly it is tempting to hold that the rudimentary ideas of this religion grew in ancient times.[10]

Now, it was the tradition of India in ancient days that the teachings of the preceptors were preserved in memory by the pupils and followers as the art of writing was not known in those days. This tradition continued for a long time and the teachings of a sage or preceptor continued through the successive generations of pupils and followers and at a very late date the teachings were recorded by a very distant pupil or follower. So it was with Jainism also It is historically true that the *Anga* and the *Dṛṣṭivada* text of the Svetambara school or sect preceded the text of the Digambara school or sect and many of the collections of the Śvetambara texts were recorded as utterances of Sudharma in reply to the questions put by Jambu.[11] In such a case, there are two possibilities · first, that such utterances may not reflect faithfully the very old teaching and, secondly, that many unnecessary and improbable things may find place in such utterances. But this is no peculiarity of Jainism alone, this is present in other religions also. And because of the above difficulties, many of the Jaina texts have come to record very improbable facts about the stature and the longivity of the Tirthankaras.

We are told that after attaining the *kevala jñāna* (supreme knowledge) Rsabhanatha "preached to the suffering mankind his peace and liberation giving creed of love and non-violence".[12] We also learn from the *Bhāgavat Purāna* (V.15) that the Tirthankara "Sumati followed the path of Rsabha" and that he was the grandson of Rsabha [13] and that Parsvanatha "received

[10] I say rudimentary, because definite idea of the religion dates from the days of Parsvanatha

[11] See Sen. A C., *Jaina Dharma* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1358 B.S , Visva Bharati, p. 16.

[12] Jain, J. P., *Religion and Culture of the Jainas*, New Delhi, 1975, Bharatiya Jnanpith, p. 10.

[13] Vide, Chatterjee A. K., *A Comprehensive History of Jainism*, Calcutta, 1978, Firma KLM PVT Ltd., p 5.

the teachings of the earlier Tirthankaras in a very forceful manner"[14] and that "Mahavira himself grew up under the shadow of Parsva's religion".[15] These show that a chain of continuity of thought came down to Mahavira (the last Tirthankara) from a very remote past. And it is an acknowledged fact that Jainism has changed very little even to day from the ancient times.

In view of the above, it seems that the root of Jainism goes back to the pre-Vedic days. As it is the custom of our country to find a particular idea about life and religion associated with the name of a particular person, so it is very reasonable to believe that the rudimentary ideas of Jainism were also originated with some person in the pre-Vedic days. There is much difficulty in assigning a date to the origin of the rudimentary ideas of Jainism, in view of the fact that many of the modern scholars believe that this religion originated from Parsvanatha. But I humbly attempt at this with my very limited knowledge.

Mahavira died on (according to the Jaina belief)	527 B.C.
He lived for 72 years	72
Mahavira's date of birth	599 B.C.
Parsvanatha attained enlightenment 250 years before Mahavira attained enlightenment at the age of 43 599 B C. — 43	556 B.C.*
	250
So Parsvanatha lived in	806 B.C.
Say roughly	800 B.C.†
Now, assuming that there was no time-gap between the earlier Tirthankaras and assuming further that each of such 22 Tirthankaras had a life span of 80 years,[16] we can presume that the rudimentary ideas of Jainism originated 80x22 years before Parsvanatha	1760 years
Probable date about the origin of the rudimentary ideas of Jainism.	2560 B.C.

*According to Sri J P. Jain, it is 557 B.C. See his *Religion and Culture of the Jainas*, p. 15.

†After Dr. A. K. Chatterjee, See his *A Comprehensive History of Jainism*, p. 15.

[14] Jain, J. P, *Op. Cit*, p. 13

[15] Chatterjee, A K., *Op Cit.*, p 20.

[16] I have taken here the average life of the Tirthankaras to be of 80 years following the *mantra* in the *Rgveda—pasyema saradah satam jivema saradah satam* (*Rk* 7. 66.16) which shows that even in the *Rgveda* days men did not live for 100 years and longed for it.

As I have already pointed out that ideas are associated with particular persons, it is natural to hold that the rudimentary ideas of the Jainas were also associated with some person and there is no harm or unhistoricity if this person is named Rsabhanatha.

The Teachings of Parsvanatha and Mahavira

Now let us proceed to consider the teachings of Parsvanatha and Mahavira. Parsvanatha introduced 4 teachings to the society, viz.(1) not to injure, (2) not to lie, (3) not to steal and (4) not to have attachement to external possessions. His teachings are called vows, collectively known as *caturyāma* and he and his followers came to be known as Nirgantha (one having no knot). Mahavira did not amend any of the teachings of his predecessor Tirthankara, he simply added a 5th to the teachings viz. not to idulge in adultery.[17] Parsvanatha did not go naked, but Mahavira went on naked after his acquaintance with Mankhaliputra Gosala at Nalanda who went naked as the head of the Ajivika sect which had a good following in the days of Mahavira. It is generally believed that Gosala's nakedness influenced Mahavira to go naked, though the Jainas would say that his nakedness followed from the observance of the 4th vow viz. not to have attachment to external possessions. Since these five vows are primarily ethical codes about behaviour in a society, we may call these vows collectively as great Five Rules of Behaviour

Mahavira organized Jainism systematically and preached it among men and women who gathered around him. He spoke in the language then current among them, this language with some change came to be known afterwards as Ardha-Magadhi. He spoke plainly about his religion and explained his teachings by means of lively illustrations. His preeching was open to all irrespective of class, caste, creed and sex. His principal place of preaching was Rajagrha-Nalanda region and at this place he had many followers among the Brahmin, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra and among the rich (including such persons as Cetaka, king of Videha, Kunika, king of Anga and Satanika, king of Kausambi) and the poor.

It may be contended that the great Five Rules of Behaviour are nothing new, these were inherent in the *Upanișads* in one form or another. True, these principles are not new and these are found in the vast *Upanișada* literature, but only a few had access to it because this ancient literature was written in Sanskrit and because it was not open to the women in ancient India. As such, they could not know the teachings that

[17] *Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch. 7, *sl*. 1. *himsa'nrtasteyabrahmaparigrahebhyo virati vratam.*

were scattered through the vast literature. Hence, these were lost to them. Mahavira in a very simple language, preached these ordinary but very useful principles of ethical code for the proper guidance of men and women of the society. Thus, he brought out the treasures that were hidden in the sea of the *Upaniṣada* literature and thus hidden from the common eye. Herein lies the speciality of Mahavira. Had he not preached these principles these would not have attracted the notice of the people in the way these did, because commonplaces do not ususlly attract the notice of the society.

During the life time of Mahavira, there was no schism among the Jainas. But differences between the goups was latent in the society and it centred around the nakedness followed by the disciples of Mahavira and non observance of this practice by the old Nirgranthas. This difference became bitter when Bhadrabahu and his followers, who went to Karnataka during the famine that occured at about 400B.C. when Candra gupta Maurya was on the throne of Magadha, came back naked to Magadha and found that those who stayed at Magadha under the leadership of Sthulabhadra during the famine wore clothes. They did not recognise the literature collected by Sthulabhadra and others during the 1st Jaina Council. This difference, associated with some other minor differences led to the final division of the Jaina community in the 1st century A.D. into two main groups viz. Digambara (sky clad) and Svetambara (white clad).

Though there was division, it was only outward, it did not affect the inward practices of the Jainas which were common for each group. The difference betweens the two can be briefly noted as below :[18]

To the Digambaras, Mahavira's statue must be naked, women cannot attain release, Mahavira was for ever a bachelor and the Jaina ascetics must remain sky-clad.

Now, in connection with the teachings of Mahavira, it has been pointed out by Prof. A. L. Basham[19] that these do not involve love to the world. The vow that comes near to this requirement is the first vow, not to injure[20] i.e. the doctrine of *ahimsā*. In the Jaina system, the doctrine of *ahimsā*

[18] See Sen. A. C , *Op Cit.*, p. 18.

[19] Basham A. L., *The Wonder that was India*, Calcutta, 1963. Orient Longmans Ltd , p. 293.

[20] Some authors prefer the word 'non-violence' to the words 'not to injure'. But as the word 'non-violence' has a political flavour, I use the words 'not to injure' in place of the word 'non-violence'.

is based on a deep philosophy and not on the principle of love and amity. The animistic belief of the Jainas, to which I have already referred to in the above,[21] supplies the philosophical basis for *ahimsā*. "According to the archaic science the whole cosmos was alive, and the basic laws of its life were constant throughout. One should therefore practise non-violence (*ahimsā*) even upon the smallest, mutest, least conscious living being."[22] The Jainas in their day to day dealings observe this principle of *ahimsā* in a great detail e.g. Jaina monks of particular sects wear a veil before their mouths to avoid causing damage to invisible insects, they in general try to take their meal before dusk to avoid injury to small insects, and often think of sufferings to the flower trees before plucking flowers and so on. Indeed, the Jainas have carried the doctrine of *ahimsā* to the extreme. Thus, A. Barth is perfectly right when he says, "No Hindu sect has carried *ahimsā* further i.e. respect for and abstinence from everything that has life."[23] But the source of this *ahimsā* in the Jainas is not pity and amity towards others, it is respect for others because, they think, the others have life in as much they have and hence they have no right to injure or harm others in any form. In fact Lord Mahavira himself explained the basis of *ahimsā* thus : "Non-violence and kindness to living beings is kindness to oneself for thereby one's own self is saved from various kinds of sins and the consequent suffering and is thus able to secure its own welfare."[24] Thus a Jaina, in the matter of *ahimsā* is moved by his head and not by heart Hence, I feel that there is no escape from the conclusion arrived at by Prof Basham

The Jaina Cosmology

To understand the system of the Jainas, it is necessary to have a brief idea about their views on the world. They regard the universe as beginningless and endless, that is to say, the universe, with all its constituents or components, is without a beginning or an end, being everlasting and eternal. There is no scope for the periodic dissolution and recreation of the universe. "Therefore, there is no place in Jainism for an independent person like God as creator or destroyer."[25]

[21] See above, p 64.

[22] Zimmer H , *Op Cit* , p 278.

[23] Barth, A., *The Religions of India*, Varanashi, 1963, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series office, p 145

[24] Vide Jain J. P., *Op. Cit.*, p 187.

[25] S. Sanghvi, 'Some Fundamental Principles of Jainism', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta, 1958. The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, vol. 1, p. 440.

To the Jainas, the cycle of time continually revolves through rise and fall. "In Bharata and Airavata there is rise and fall (regeneration and degeneration) during the six periods of the two aeons of regeneration and degeneration."[26] Thus, time introduces changes in the existing state of human beings. The ascending (*utsarpinī*) phase and the descending (*avasarpinī*) phase go on revolving each other continuously in succession ; each of these phases in a division of a unit of cosmic time called *kalpa*, that is to say, the phases joined together constitute a *kalpa*. The *utsarpinī* phase ushers in a period of gradual evolution and the *avasarpinī* phase brings a period of gradual devolution or deterioration in man, that is to say, in the span of his life, his bodily strength, his nature, his happiness and in the length of the phase itself. Each phase has six divisions e.g. first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth. At the end of the sixth phase, the cycle reverses : conditions in the first three divisions are called *bhogabhūmi* and those in the rest three divisions are known as *karmabhūmi*. In the *bhogabhūmi*, man depends on nature, while in the *karmabhūmi*, he depends on his own efforts. The fourth division of each cycle is regarded as the best from the point of human civilization and culture, as this phase sees the birth of Tirthankaras and other great men. We are at present passing through the fifth division of *avasarpinī*, the descending phase of the universal cycle of cosmic time and hence there has been a decline in human innocence, spiritual culture, span of life, happiness and stature.[27] These will deteriorate further as the descending phase will move on.

In this connection I may mention that Mr. J. P. Jain in his *Religion and Culture of the Jainas* (p 8) has depicted the cycle of time as revolving "pendulum like in half circles one ascending and the other descending from the paradisical to the catastrophical period and back to the former." But the analogy of the pendulum does not, I feel, depict the full import of the cyclical movement of time from one point to another.

Like the cycle of time, man is caught in the vicious and sorrowful tangle of birth, death and rebirth. "The round of rebirth is endless, full of suffering, and of no avail, and of itself it can yield no realease, no divine redeeming grace, the very gods are subject to its deluding spell."[27] Man is entangled in this vicious entanglement because of his *āsrava* (i.e. karmic inflection into his life monad) which he gets because of his four passions (*kasāya*) viz. wrath, pride, guile and greed which overpower him when he comes in contact with the environment. It is these four passions which are at the

[26] Set. S. N., Pujyapada's *Sarvarthasiddhi*, tr. by Jain, S. A., ch. 3, *sl.* 27. *bharatairavatayorvrdhihrasosatsamayabhyamutsarpinyavasarpinibhyam.*

[27] Zimmer. H., *Op Cit.*, p. 227.

root of all sufferings in *samsāra*. These passions account for *bandha* (the fettering and smothening of *jiva* (life-monad) by karmic matter. Every thought and action entails an accumulation of fresh karmic substance. It (the karmic substance) communicates colours (*leśyā*) to the life monad ; that is to say *leśyā* indicates the character of the life monad the whiter the colour is the brighter is the prospect of reaching the life's goal i.e. the release. "The process of life itself consumes the karmic substance, burning it up like fuel, but at the same time attracts fresh material to the burning centre of vital operations. Thus life monad is reinfected by *karma*;"[28] the fine particles of matter that bind the soul. It mingles with particles of *karma* like water with milk or like fire with iron in a red hot, glowing iron ball. "New seeds of future fruits pour in. Two contradictory yet exactly complementary processes are kept, in this way, in operation. The seeds, the karmic materials are being exhausted rapidly all the time through the unconscious as well as the conscious actions of the psychosomatic system and yet through those identical actions the karmic storage bins are being continually re-stocked. Hence, the conflagration that is one's life goes crackling on." Man experiences happiness or misery in life as fruits of *karma*. Every man/woman is responsible for his/her own *karma* and it accounts for his/her rebirth in this world again and again in different forms.

Jainism regards every man and woman capable of coming out of this vicious tangle by means of his/her individual efforts and not by means of any divine grace as divine grace cannot lead to *mokṣa*, the release. It is only by individual exertion, by observing a code of morality and devotion to austerities, some times of a rigorous type, that one can attain *mokṣa* i e the release. It believes that every one has in his or her the super qualities for attaining the release and it is the karmic inflection of the life monad that overshadows the super qualities in one. When the fresh influx of the karmic inflection in the life monad is stopped (*samvara*) and when the life monad sheds away or eliminates the karmic matter that is already in it (*nirjarā*) "by means of cleaning austerities, burning it out with the internal heat of ascetic practices (*tapas*) as by a sweating cure"[29] the union of *jīva* and *ajīva*[30] in the life monad is separated and it attains *mokṣa*.

[28] Zimmer, H., *Ibid.*, p 249.
[29] Zimmer, H., *Ibid*, p 274
[30] *Jiva* means the life monad and *ajiva* means all that is not the life monad. There are five categories of *ajiva*. These are : *pudgala* (matter), dharma (medium of motion), *adhrma* (medium of rest), *akasa* (space) and *kala* (time).

It will be seen from the above that unlike the *Vedas*, Jainism does not prescribe the performance of *yajñas* as the means to the attainment of *mokṣa*, it did not believe in god and in his capacities and potentialities. It did not accept the social structure viz. the caste system upheld by the *Vedas* and did not believe the Vedic literature as divine revelation. The result being when Brahmanism flourished, it found the preachings of the Tirthankaras as opposed to those laid down by itself. Hence, Jainism was regarded as heretical or atheistic in nature. The word 'heretical' means relating to an opinion opposed to the usual or conventional belief. Judged from this point of view, Jainism can be regarded as a heretical religion because it was opposed to the *Vedas*. And, the word 'atheism' implies disbelief in the existance of god. We have already noted that Jainism does not believe in god. But it is interesting to note here that it looks upon man as god when his inherent powers are fully in blossom. God is here only another word for "the soul at its best".[31] It looks upon its Tirthankaras as gods, or more than gods. We read, "At the mere mention of the name of the Lord Parsva disturbances cease, the sight (*darśana*) of him destroys the fear of rebirths, and his worship removes the guilt of sin".[32] Hence, it can be said that as Jainism believes in god-head, though not in god, it has not been able to do away with the idea of god. So this religion can not be labelled as atheistic in nature.

The Jaina Way out

The object of Jainism is to save the life monad from the influence of *karma*. And with this end in view, it has prescribed special ethical code, collectively called as *ratnatraya* or *triratna* (the three jewels) The observance of *ratnatraya*. viz. right faith (*samyak darśana*), right knowledge (*samyak jñāna*) and right conduct (*samyak cārita*) constitutes the *mokṣa-mārga* (the path to release or salvation), that is to say, the observance of these together leads to the release,[33] the ultimate aim of life of a man, on the destruction of *karma*. The especiality that is to be noted in connection with the *mokṣa-mārga* is that all the constituents of *ratnatraya*

[31] Hiriyanna, M., *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Bombay, 1976, George Allen and Unwin (India) Pvt. Ltd., pp. 170-171.

[32] Vide, Zimmer, H., *Op. Cit.*, p. 181. The Tirthankaras were not regarded as gods from the very beginning of Jainism. I feel that they were deified when some of them were regarded as the incarnations of the Hindu god, Visnu in the *Bhagvad Purana*, a work of near 1st Century B.C.

[33] *samyaktvajnanayuktam caritram ragadvesaparihinam*
moksasya bhavati margo bhavyanam labdhabudhinam
—*Pancastikayasara, gatha* 106.

must be followed together. It is not a case that all the paths lead to Rome, but it is a case where traversing all the paths, one can reach Rome. The observance of any one path or *ratna* with the exclusion of others will not lead to *mokṣa* however skilfully and devotedly that path may be pursued. This is the effect if any two paths are pursued with the exclusion of the third. I quote a lengthy passage to explain this point further. "Unlike other religious schools, which lay all the emphasis either on *bhakti* (of the Bhagvatas), or *jñāna* (of the Vedentins), or *karma* (of the Mimamsakas), as means of salvation, Jainism holds that all the three must co-exist in a person, if he is to walk along the path of salvation. The Jaina commentators make the meaning quite clear by bringing in the analogy of medicine as a curative of some malady. Faith in its efficacy, knowledge of its use, and actual taking of the medicine—all these three must be present if a cure is to be effected. In the same way the universal malady of *samsāric* misery, which every soul is suffering from, can be cured by this triple panacea, the *ratnatraya* When accepted as a mixture of the three principles of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. If any one element is missing, the other two though each is valuable in itself, would be useless."[34]

Of the above (the *triratna* or *ratnatraya*) the most important is the one that comes first viz. right faith (*samyak darśana*) It consists in deep conviction or "unshaken belief in the Jaina scriptures and then teachings, and is intended particularly to dispel scepticism or doubt which thwarts spiritual growth."[35] It is such that ends do not justify the means, a good result is not worthy of value if it is obtained by evil or unfair means The second viz. right knowledge (*samyak jñāna*) implies correct idea about the Jaina *tattvas*, that is, the Jaina religion and philosophy. This can be obtained from a proper study of the life and teachings of the Jinas or Tirthankaras contained in the *Agama* literature. Right knowledge must be free from doubt, perversity and indefiniteness so that it can form correct idea or knowledge about the precise nature of a thing. The third viz right conduct (*samyak cārita*) is the most useful path or *ratna* from the point of view of its application is practice. Because it is the right conduct that leads to the destruction of *karma* in the life monad It consists in the observance of the five vows associated with the name of Mahavira. These are: "not to injure any living being (*ahimsā*), (2) not to lie (*satya*), (3) not to steal (asteya), (4) not to have attachment to external

[34] A. Chakravorty Nayanar, 'Jainism: Its Philosophy and Ethics', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta 1958, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, p. 430
[35] Hiriyanna, M., *Op. Cit.*, p. 166

possessions (*aparigraha*) and (5) not to indulge in adultery (*brahmacarya*)."[36]

Of the *triratna* it is to be noted that the observance of the right conduct cannot fully materialise unless one has proper idea about the other *ratnas* viz. right faith and right knowledge, for the proper understanding of the right conduct presupposes understanding about right faith and right knowledge. If one observes the right conduct without knowing why it is pursued his object will not materialise. The first two *ratnas* viz right faith and right knowledge prepare the seeker of *mokṣa* mentally and spiritually for the proper performance of the duties enumerated under the third *ratna* viz. right conduct.

The Liberation (Mokṣa)

For practical purpose, the observance of the *triratna* or *ratnatraya* will lead to the destruction of all *karma* and will disjoin the union of the *jīva and ajīva* and thus it will lead to *mokṣa*, the release or salvation or liberation. In Sri Pujyapada's *Sarvārthasiddhi*[37] stages in the attainment of *mokṣa* or liberation on the destruction of *karma* has been described as under :

(1) Omniscience i.e. *kevala jñāna* or (perfect knowledge) is attained on the destruction of deluding *karmas*, and on the destruction of knowledge and perception covering *karmas* and obstructive *karmas*.[38]

(2) Owing to the absence of the cause of bondage and with the functioning of the dissociation of *karmas*, the annihilation of all *karmas* is liberation.[39]

(3) (Emancipation is attained) on the destruction of psycic factors also

[36] *dharmadisradhanam samyaktvam jnanamangapurvagatam*
cesta tapasi carya vyavaharo moksamarga iti
—*Pancastikayasara, gatha*, 160

[37] *Sarvarthasiddhi*, trans by S. A. Jain, Calcutta 1960, Virasasanasangha, ch. X.

[38] *mohaksayanjnanadarsanavaranantarayaksayascca kaivalyam*
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch. 2, *sl*. 1.

[39] *vandhahetvabhavanirjarabhyam krtyakarmavipramokso moksah*
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch. 2, *sl*. 2.

(4) like quietism and potentiality other than infinite faith, infinite knowledge, infinite perception and infinite perfection.[40]

(5) Immediately after that the soul darts up to the end of the universe.[41]

(6) As the soul is previously impelled, as it is free from ties on attachment,[42]

(7) as the bondage has been snapped and as it is of the nature of darting upwards like the potter's wheel, the ground devoid of mud, the shell of the castorseed and the flame of the candle.[43]

Now, what happens when a man attains the release or liberation ? He escapes from the *samsāric* cycle of births and deaths and is beyond the bounds of conditioned understanding which determine the modes of being of the various human, animal, plant and even inorganic species. He neither perceives nor thinks, and does not interfere with the course of the universal round but is aware of every thing directly He knows truth precisely as it is He is ommiscient or a *siddha jīva* (pure *jīva* or *ātmā*) as the sheer life force itself would be if it could be relieved of the modifying darkness of specific organism, each with its limited range of sense and thinking faculties. "For the moment the limitations that make particular experiences possible are eliminated, the perfect intuition of everything knowlable is immediately attained. The need of experience is dissolved in infinite knowledge."[44] Thus, when one attains *mokṣa*, he becomes an object of worship as god. Hence, the exalted position of the Tirthankaras among the Jainas. Their worship moves the mind of the Jainas to the highest good "which is eternal peace beyond the joys as well as the sorrows of the universal round."

[40] *aupasamikadibhavyatvanam ca*
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch 2, *sl* 3.

[41] *anyatrakevalasamyakatvajnanadarsanasiddhatvebhyah*
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch 2, *sl* 4

[42] *tadanantaramurdham gachatyalokantan*
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch 2, *sl* 5.

[43] *purvaprayogasangatvadvandhachedattvathagatiparinamacca*
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch. 2, *sl*. 6.

abiddhakulallacakravattapagatalepalabuderandavijavadagni sikhavacca
—*Sarvarthasiddhi*, ch. 2, *sl*. 7.

[44] Zimmer. H., *Op Cit*., pp 260-261. The entire paragraph leans heavily on Zimmer, pp. 259-262.

Jainism as applied to the Society

It has been pointed out above that the right conduct is the most useful path from the point of view of its application. From this stand point, the society has been broadly classified as consisting of the two categories of persons viz. the laity or the common man who lives in a *samsāra* with his near relatives and has some worldly possessions and the ascetics who have renounced worldly life and pleasures and aspire after the attainment of *mokṣa*. We may note briefly the principal duties assigned to the two categories.

First the laity or the common man [45] He is to abstain from :

(1) taking meat, fish etc., drinking wines and other liquors and eating honey squeezed out of live honey combs
(2) injury to any living being
(3) falsehood
(4) stealing
(5) attachment to external possessions
(6) adultery
(7) useless talk and action
(8) sinful thoughts and acts

And he is to observe the following :

(1) must worship at fixed times, morning, noon and evening
(2) must fast on certain days
(3) must give charity in the way of knowledge, money etc. everyday

Now, rules for an asceties.[46] He is to follow strictly :

(1) the five great vows (*mahāvratas*), eg. *ahimsā*, *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (taking nothing belonging to others, for own use, without permission of the owner), *brahmacarya* (chastity) and *aparigraha* (possessionlessness)

(2) the five precautionary rules or cares (*samities*), viz. taking due and proper care in walking or moving about, in speaking, in eating and drinking, in lifting and putting down things, books etc. and in attending calls of nature

[45] Taken from Zimmer, H., *Op. Cit*, p. 196 (foot note).
[46] Taken from Jain, J. P, *Op Cit.*, p 91.

(3) the three controls or restrains (*guptis*) of mind, speech and body keeping silent and immobile for a length of time

It will be observed from the above that in the two sets of rules of behaviour prescribed for the two categories of the society, there are five common to each category viz. (1) abstention from injury to living beings (*ahimsa*), (2) speaking the truth (*satya*), (3) refraining from stealing (*asteya*), (4) observing chastity (*brahmacarya*) and (5) limiting one's possessions (*aparigraha*). These rules or vows in the case of a house-holder is called *anuvratas* (lesser vows) because of the slight deviations in the observation of these allowed in his case because of the circumstances and environments under which he lives,[47] while in the case of an ascetic, these are called *mahāvratas* because of the rigour and strictness with which he is expected to follow these.[48]

Further, it will also be observed that the other rules of behaviour in each of the two categories of the society are but elaborations of the great five rules or vows common to each category I may also add that the observance of the great five rules or vows will lead to the following of the rest of the rules of behaviour of the respective groups as by-products follow the principal product in a industry

Moreover, it should be remembered that the rules of behaviour prescribed for the two categories of the society are designed to lead to stop the influx and the destruction of deluding *karmas*, in the life monad as these are the root of all evils in man. As the stopping of the influx and the destruction of *karma* entirely depends on man, Jainism lays special stress on the day to day behaviour of man which outlines his way of life It is these ethical exercises which alone can save a man from the clutches of *karma*, these will refine his mental attitude and thus ultimately prepare him for the *mokṣa*.

It can be easily seen that the rules of behaviour outlined for the ordinary man and the ascetic are complementary in character, and if these differ, it is only in respect of the rigour and strictness and mental make-up with which the respective one puts it into practice. While most of the other religions look primarily to the outward activities of one, Jainism

[47] Space does not allow me to discuss here these concessions or deviations in detail ; interested readers are required to see A. N Upadhye , 'Jainism' in *A Cultural History of India* ed by A L Basham, Oxford, 1975, Clarendon Press, pp. 106 to 108 and A Chakraborty Nayanar, *Op. Cit*, pp 430-433

[48] See the references cited in the above footnote

looks to the mental make up which prompts that action ; here a good work done with an evil motive is not fair in the eye of religion. Thus, Jainism looks towards the mental preparedness of the *mokṣa*-seeker. The great five rules are great steps towards the attainment of the necessary make up. And it is to be remembered that the activities which follow the change in mental make up last long in a man and form a permanent part of his character which ultimately outline his way of life.

Lastly, the rules of behaviour for the ordinary man and the ascetic are arranged in such a way that these together form the ascending steps of a steep staircase. Ordinary man is to observe the rules of behaviour with some flexibility, *anuvratas* which form the lower steps of the staircase ; gradually his mental make up and activities are refined and he performs or observes the *mahāvratas* which are the higher ascending steps of the staircase. And such refined practices, with refined outlook, will lead the follower of the great five rules of behaviour to *mokṣa* which is at the top of the staircase. Such is also the state of affairs with a young trainee who enters into a Jaina Sangha to seek the betterment of his life and accepts a *yati* as his preceptor. He also, at first performs the directions of the rules with some flexibility and then adopts the rigourous course. Hence,"the *pañca aṇuvratas* are but the probation for the *pañca mahāvratas*."[49] Now, it can be easily followed that a man has to climb upon the different steps of the staircase to attain *mokṣa*, he can not attain it from an intermediate step of the staircase. Hence, in Jainism, an ordinary man living in the *saṃsāra* cannot attain *mokṣa*, he must pass through the life of an ascetic before he can attain it.

The Liberation an Alternative Approach

We have so long considered the possibility of attaining *mokṣa* (liberation) in this world. We shall now look at this point from an alternative point of view emanating from a re-consideration of the Jaina cosmology which we have outlined above.

The cycle of time indicates that "we are now living in the fith age of the *avasarpiṇī* (descending half-circle) of the current cycle (*kalpa*) of time, which commenced a few years after Mahavira's *nirvāṇa* (527 B.C.) and is of 21000 years of duration."[50] According to this calculation, we have crossed only 2507 years (527 years + 1980 years) of this phase and we are yet to cross 18,493 years (21000-2507) to arrive at the sixth phase of

[49] Chakraborty, Nayanar A., *Op. Cit.*, p. 432.
[50] Jain, J. P., *Op. Cit*, p. 9

the *kalpa* which will also last for 21000 years[51] and at the end of which the cycle of time will revolve again.

In the fifth phase of the *kalpa* we are in a miserable condition. "Today we are no longer gaints, indeed, we are so small, both physically and spiritually that the religion of the Jainas has become too difficult, and there will be no more Tirthankaras in the present cycle. Moreover, as time moves on to the conclusion of our present descending age, the scale of humanity will decline still further, the religion of the Jinas will disappear, and the earth, finally, will be an unspeakable morass of violence, beastiality and grief "[52]

In this situation of the phase of the *kalpa*, when everything is dwindling away, there seems to be no possibility for any one to attain *mokṣa* in this world. This conclusion is based on the fact that in this *kalpa*, "after the 24 Tirthankaras and 11 Ganadharas (the immediate disciples of the Tirthankaras) had attained the *kevala jñāna* (ommiscience), only Jambu (c 500 B.C) was able to attain it and none else "[53] Now, in the Jaina theory, one must attain this *kevala jñāna* before one can attain the *mokṣa*. If such *jñāna* has not been within the reach of any body since the time of Jambu, it is hard to expect that it will be attainable in the recent time full of commercial mindedness and selfish attitude which are contrary to the requirements of the great five rules of behaviour

Further, the fifth and the sixth phases of each *kalpa* are of shorter duration than its other phases. Even this shorter duration is of 21000 years If this is the state of things, how can a man of our time attain *mokṣa* when he has an average length of life of 45 to 50 years only? Hence, I feel, there is no escape from Dr. Zimmer's conclusion, "This (Jainism) is a philosophy of the profoundest pessimism "[54]

[51] See S A. Jains' translation of Sri Pujyapada's *Sarvarthasiddhi*, commentary on *sloka* 27 of chapter III

[52] Zimmer H., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 226-227.

[53] Sen, A. C., *Op. Cit.*, p 16

[54] Zimmer, H., *Op. Cit.*, p. 227. I openly admit that I have not been able to find a way out of this reasoning and have not been able to reconcile [Though there will be no Kevali or Jina in this period in Bharata and Airavata *ksetra*, one who will entitle himself for kevalihood will be born in Mahavideha from where he will be liberated. -- Editor]

The Present State of Jainism

The great merit of Jainism lies in its spirit of accommodation about other's opinion or religion which follows from its logic, *syādvāda*, that treats all knowledge as probable and thus regards opponent's views as such as the views of a Jaina. Because of this attitude, it has been able to survive in India side by side with Hinduism.

The Jainas worship their 24 Tirthankaras as their principal divinities. Jaina texts like *Acāra Dinakara*, *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* and *Abhidhāna-Cintāmani* show in their classification of the Jaina gods and goddesses that "many of the subsidiary Hindu divinities were absorbed from the Brahminic pantheon."[55] Such divinities are : Sarasvati, Laksmi, Ganesa, Kubera, etc.

In addition to the above, among the Jainas, "confession is practised, great importance is attached to pilgrimages and four months in the year are more easily given up to fastings, the reading of sacred books, and spiritual meditations."[56]

The Jains have now a days entered into almost all the professions and businesses excepting that of selling flesh and meat.

The Stability of the Jaina Society

I have already referred to the accommodating nature of the Jaina religion that has contributed to its stability. The stable religion can hold together its followers tightly. The Jaina society owes its stability to the classification of the society into the house holder and the ascetic. In the Jaina religion, the two are complementary to each other.

The Importance of Mahavira's Teachings

Mahavira's teaching for attaining *mokṣa* is contrary to the prescriptions of the Vedic literature where performance of *yajñas* conducted by priests and worship of the *devas* was the only way of reaching heaven. Many difficult rituals surrounded the performance of *yajña* and it was very expensive and naturally beyond the reach of the common man. In these circumstances, Mahavira's teaching appeared some thing novel

[55] Ghatage. A. M, 'Jainism', *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. II,. Bombay, 1968, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, p 426.
[56] Barth. A, *Op. Cit.*, p. 143.

and it attracted many men and women. He emphasised the importance of soul and its transmigration due to the inflection of *karma* in the life-monad. So long this inflection persists in the life monad, it cannot attain *mokṣa*. One has to follow the *triratna* to attain it, no body else can do it for one's behalf. No worship of god or goddess can bring it to one. That is to say, every body has to work for himself as he himself alone is responsible for his own *karma*.

By its stress on the character of a man and holding before him the prospect of attaining *mokṣa* in this life and chalking out a definite mode of life for its followers, Jainism has become a way of life in a more effective sense than many other religions of this world. The *triratna* not only shows a man but also guides him to the path a *mokṣa*. The *triratna* requires a strong will force to follow it, it entails no expenditure. Everyone who has the will and is ready to undergo the moral and spiritual practices can attain *mokṣa*. Nothing else is necessary.

The Outlook for Jainism

The importance of Jainism lies in the generality of the *triratna* every man and woman can follow, even if he is not a Jaina Its principle of *ahiṃsā* (not to injure), based on the philosophical idea of the equality of all lives has, for its corollary, the principle, 'do to others as you wish to be done by them' If these two principles are followed in the society these will promote peace and friendship in the society and will thus end enmity in it. Thus these have a great practical value. And if these principles are extended to the world, these can play an international role in promoting peace and friendship there too. I feel, the success of these principles depends on how these are applied in practice.

The following of the *triratna* is sure to bring a change in the character of man and with it a change in the outlook of man. If there is an improvement in the character of man, the entire structure of the society will change for the better. Nothing else will be necessary to make the present unhappy, dissatisfied and harsh man happy, satisfied and humble. Thus, the *triratna* has a great social value in the present days.

Even a sceptic or an atheist who does not believe in religion, will find it profitable to observe or follow the *triratna* as it will certainly transform him to a better human being than he was before. The *triratna* is nothing but an ethical code, it is not a religious prescription. Even if we are all sceptic or atheist and do not believe in rebirth or in *mokṣa*, we shall have not to think deep to realise the utility of the *triratna*, for

the observance of it will surely bring in a better society of human beings, if not any thing else. This is not an insignificant gain in these days of social unrest and enmity.

In view of the above potentialities of Jainism it is necessary to popularise it among the public by proper preaching, a need of which, I feel, the Jaina society is not conscious at present. If it considers for a while how Mahavira spent the last 30 years of his life in preaching his message of peace and good-will among people without any distinction of caste, creed, class, age or sex, it will realise how insignificant is its own contribution in this respect.

Since a Jaina is committed to see the welfare of mankind he can not avoid the duty of making men conscious about the treasures in Jainism so that they can follow its way to seek their spiritual betterment. And seeing the woeful plight through which the mankind is passing to day, I leave this noble task as a sacred trust to every Jaina and cherish the hope that every one will do his or her might in this respect.

The General Summing Up

We have seen above the panorama of Jainism, the rules of behaviour prescribed by it, have penetrated into the different aspects of the lives of men and women who follow it. By pointing out the cause of miseries in the *samsāra* and prescribing the *triratna* for the release from these, Mahavira serves as the saviour for his followers. He is a living ideal for them. His life inspires his followers to follow the *triratna.*

The path (*triratna*) chalked out by Jainism is very simple in nature and distinct in character. While most other religions ask their followers to perform certain religious functions through priests or the like to reach heaven after their death, Jainism prescribes certain ethical functions and spiritual exercises to attain *mokṣa* (the life's end) in this world. Here no religious ceremonies are prescribed.[57] Here, the seeker of *mokṣa* must make the necessary efforts for himself, for he reaps as he sows. No other man, whether priest or the like, can help him in this respect. The only help he gets is the inspiration from the lives of the Trithankaras which act as ideals for him.

[57] The worshipping of the deities, I may remind my readers, is not in the original programme of Jainism. Such worshipping, I feel, was borrowed from Hinduism when it (Jainism) came in contact with the other (i.e. the Hinduism).

The way of life outlined by Jainism is not a mere copy of the ways suggested by the religions which originated before and after it. It is unique in itself. Here the purification of character is the most important thing. Nothing acts as a substitute for character. The *triratna* shapes the character of a man and prepares him intellectually and spiritually too and thus purifies him. Only such a purified man can aspire after *mokṣa*. Thus, the *triratna* acts as his friend, philosopher and guide in his way to *mokṣa*.

Being thus charmed with this way of life, I take refuge to the Tirthankaras, promulgators of the *triratna*.

mokṣamārgasya netāram bhetāram karmabhūbhṛtām
jñātāram viśvatattvānam vande tadguṇalavdhaye
—*Sarvārthasiddhi*, ch. 2, *sl.* 2.

The Jainist Soul of Henry David Thoreau

Rev. Noel Rettig Jain

In a rare comparison of Henry David Thoreau and George Bernard Shaw, Albert Gilman and Roger Brown write :

> "Both men attempted to found every action, even trivial ones, on principle. Both eschewed alcohol and tobacco, both were vegetarians, both admired fanatical men."[1]

If we take those character traits which Thoreau had in common with Bernard Shaw, and add to them the traits which were uniquely Thoreau's, we find that we have an Occidental Jainist.

Jainism is the ethical religion par excellence. No other religion has taken temperance and other rules for living so seriously. At the base of this ethical system is the creedal statement, "*ahimsā paramo dharma*" (non-violence is the highest religion) ; on this axiom is built the whole structure of the faith. The founder of the religion, Mahavira, was an absolute fanatic in observing this precept. Refusing even to step on ants, he and his followers carried a broom with which they gently brushed them to one side. Knowing this, need we discuss the importance of vegetarianism in the creed ?

Every action of the Jainist must be in accord with the aforementioned axiom. Is it any wonder then that Jainism is a faith for renunciants ? The average property holder simply cannot avoid destruction of life, which is involved in safeguarding one's possessions and in building something more than a mere hermitage for habitation. One can almost hear Thoreau shout "Amen" from the realm of the departed.

[1] Albert Gilman and Roger Brown, "Personality and Style in Concord", *Transcendentalism and Its Legacy*, ed. Myron Simon and T. H. Parsons, (Ann Arbor : Univ. of Mich. Press, 1966) p. 104.

If we look at a couple of the sayings of Mahavira we find thoughts that might very well have been born during Thoreau's retreat on the banks of Walden Pond.

> "Happy are we, happy live we, who call nothing our own.—The more you get, the more you want ; your desires increase with your means."[2]

In *Walden* we find :

> "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity ! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand."[3]

The awareness of the transitory nature of life and of the importance of making use of the here-and-now is expressed thus by Mahavira :

> "You cannot prolong your life, therefore be not careless ; you are past help when old age approaches."[4]

Thoreau is not careless :

> "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life . . . and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."[5]

Time is of the essence to all men ; Thoreau and Mahavira are no exceptions. Again from *Walden* :

> "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it ; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is."[6]

[2] Mahavira, *The Sayings of Lord Mahavira* (Aliganj, U.P. India World Jain Mission) p. 7.
[3] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden—Civil Disobedience*, ed. Sherman Paul, (Boston : Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960) p. 63.
[4] Mahavira, p. 6.
[5] Thoreau, p 62.
[6] Ibid., p 68.

Complimentary to this is Mahavira's saying :

> "Time is the cause of the shortening of the duration of life as well as of wealth ; the amassers of wealth love money more than their lives."[7]

Many are the parallels to be drawn between Thoreau and the Indian sage. Some one might object that Thoreau certainly wouldn't have swept ants from his path. Perhaps so ; nevertheless he exhibited the same reverence for ants as did Mahavira, albeit in a different way, when he carefully recorded their activities in *Walden*.

Was Thoreau secretly a Jainist ? It is unlikely that, in this case, there was any cultural transference. However, one thing is certain, and that is that the impact of both Thoreau and Mahavira brought about non-violent change in the world ; Gandhi, for example, was both a Jainist and an admirer of Thoreau. The non-violent teachings he gleaned from Jainism and Civil Disobedience were woven into the very fabric of his life. The holy life he led had a profound effect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who also lived in the spirit of Mahavira and Thoreau.

Thoreau, Emerson wrote, "inferred universal law from the single fact".[8] Mahavira said that "he who knows one thing knows all things".[9] What was this "one thing", this "single fact" ? Basically it was reverence for life ; we see it in the pacifism and vegetarianism of the two men, in Thoreau's praises of a single flower, in Mahavira's declaration that even that single flower has a spark of Divinity, in both men's contempt for the use of the gun or the trap, and in the general inoffensiveness of their manner. This reverence for life is what ethics is all about. After accepting this fact we can say of Mahavira and Thoreau that they were "aiming at a much more comprehensive calling, the art of living well".[10] No second-hand life spent at cocktail parties etc. was good enough for them ; they demanded nothing less than the Source of life Himself.

[7] Mahavira, p. 9.
[8] R. W. Emerson, Thoreau, *Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. R.L.Cook, (N. Y. : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1950), p. 309.
[9] Matthew McKay, *Jain Laws Explained*, (Aliganj : The World Jain Mission, 1964) p. 7.
[10] Emerson, p. 296

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